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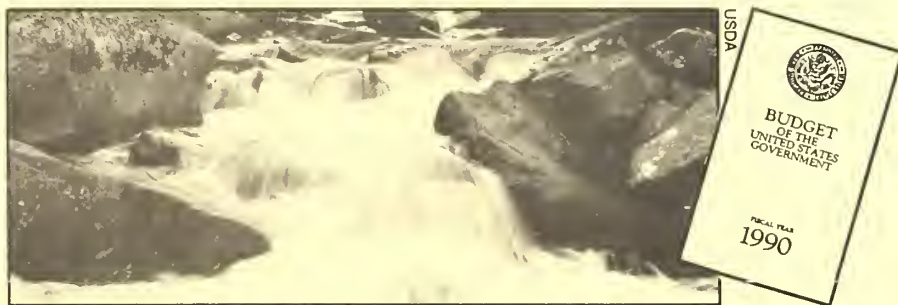


# ERS NEWSLETTER

A Bimonthly Newsletter for Economic Research Service Employees and Colleagues

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
WASHINGTON, DC

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Are wilderness streams such as this one in western Maryland threatened by agricultural inputs?

## Reagan Proposes \$41.2 Million for Water Quality Study

Former President Reagan's final budget proposal included \$41.2 million for USDA to study the effects of various economic activities on the Nation's water quality. ERS would receive \$2.45 million to collect and analyze data on agricultural chemical use, evaluate the profitability of alternative chemical management practices, and analyze the overall effects of environmental policies.

The FY 1990 proposal asks USDA to:

- determine links between agricultural production practices and water quality,
- develop and disseminate information on cost-effective chemical management through demonstration farms, and
- estimate the total economic effects of these activities on the profitability, productivity, and competitiveness of American agriculture.

Kevin Bost, Michael Dicks, Verner Grise, Shannon Hamm, Ben Huang, James Miller, Stephen Reed, Mark Weimar, and Paul Westcott. Other ERS presenters included Ralph Parlett on the outlook for food prices, Stan Daberkow on the outlook for agricultural inputs, Gregory Hanson on the financial outlook, and Katherine Reichelderfer on water quality issues. Robert Barry and John Lee were session moderators. Anthony Grano chaired the program committee.

## Need Information?

Personal computer users can take a free "guided tour" of ERS with FINDERS, an advisory system developed to provide enhanced access to ERS information and data. Through a series of menus, FINDERS offers advice on ERS information products and services, including subject-area information contacts, periodicals, and data available on diskettes and tapes.

For a free copy of FINDERS on a 5¼-inch diskette for DOS-compatible computers, contact ERS Data Manager James Horsfield, 1301 New York Ave. NW, Rm. 1228, Washington, DC 20005-4788 (202-786-3306).



## ERS Plays Major Role in USDA Annual Outlook Conference

As in past years, ERS staff made major contributions to USDA's annual Agricultural Outlook Conference held in Washington, D.C., Nov. 28-Dec. 1.

Launched 65 years ago to provide farmers with new information on seed varieties and crop developments, the conference in recent decades has served as a major forum to present and discuss food and agriculture-related outlook information with a diversity of interested people and organizations. Highlighted in this year's conference were marketing challenges for American agriculture, effects of the 1988 drought, prospects for individual farm commodities and production inputs, rural developments, resource conservation, and water quality issues.

ERS staff giving commodity outlook presentations included

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## ERS Hosts Visit by Soviet Agricultural Economists

A team of Soviet agricultural economists recently spent 10 days in the United States under the joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. Agricultural Cooperation Agreement. ERS was the official U.S. host of the team, which was in the United States under the auspices of USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development.

The team included B. Poshkush from Lithuania, V. Yelkina from Siberia, and V. Uzun from Moscow. Along with discussions within ERS, the ERS hosts arranged meetings for the team at the Harvard Business School, Ocean Spray Co., the U. of Minnesota, Land O'Lakes Co., Iowa State U., Pioneer Seed Co., Bankers Trust, and several cooperatives and farms.

The team was primarily interested in price formation, farm management, the use of personal computers on individual farms, university extension programs, economic models used in the agricultural sector, and the electronic collection and dissemination of data among farms and private and public organizations.

## ERS Reports Now Easier to Order

Most new ERS reports (including staff reports) are now available for sale from a private subscription service.

You can still get ERS reports from the Government Printing Office and National Technical Information Service, but the private subscription service is faster and allows buyers to pay with one check (to ERS), credit card, or purchase order, or "bill me" request. Also, multiyear and discounted rates for subscriptions to periodicals are available. Diskettes and tapes of ERS data products will be available soon. To order, call 1-800-999-6779, or write: ERS, P.O. Box 1608, Rockville, MD 20850.

## Current Research

### ERS Publishes Annual Food Marketing Facts and Trends

A team of ERS economists has published ERS's third annual compendium of facts, insights, and trends about food marketing in the United States. *Food Marketing Review, 1987* (AER-590) examines recent changes in the size, structure, conduct, and performance of the Nation's half-million food manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing, and foodservice firms. ERS research findings indicate:

- food marketing firms had sales of \$600 billion in 1987;
- over 10,000 new grocery products were introduced, intensifying competition for shelf space in grocery stores;
- total food advertising cost \$10 billion;
- the foodservice sector increased its share of total food expenditures to 45 percent; and
- nearly 600 mergers of food firms took place in 1986, 42 of which cost more than \$100 million each.

Economists contributing to the report were Anthony Gallo (coordinator, 786-1866), Walter Epps, Charles Handy, Phillip Kaufman, Harold Linstrom, and Lester Myers.

### Consumer Perceptions Affect Food Safety Concerns

Important questions are being raised about food safety with the pending introduction of new, "high-tech" animal growth hormones. Scientific evidence may show that resulting animal products are safe for human consumption, but will the public agree?

Recent research by ERS economists Frederick Kuchler and John McClelland (786-1456)

examined food safety in a historical context and found some interesting examples. In the early 1900's, milk pasteurization was introduced, backed by overwhelming scientific evidence about the safety and efficacy of the new technology. But, the public thought otherwise, especially outside the industrialized East. Near hysteria developed, and foes of this technological advance, consisting of consumer groups represented by the Consumers' League, fought a fierce battle in Kansas City against large milk producers and public health professionals who advocated pasteurization.

More recently, the milk supply of the Hawaiian island of Oahu was contaminated when cows were fed pineapple husks that had been treated with the insecticide heptachlor. Local health officials acted quickly to remove contaminated milk and assure the public that the milk supply was safe. The local media quickly reported positively on action taken and declared the milk supply safe, but milk sales continued to drop.

These examples suggest that consumers' perceptions of food safety, valid or not, must be considered in developing, introducing, and regulating new technologies for food production.

[*"Current Research"* is continued on p.4]

### ERS Newsletter

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## Administrator's Letter — *Reaching Out*

One of the conditions for success in achieving the ERS mission is that we be effective in getting our products and expertise to those who need them. Too often we invest significant resources in producing a product or building human capital only to have that investment diminished because its potential value is never realized. If our research reports, outlook analyses, data bases, and other information are to be useful, potential users have to know about these products and have access to them.



In recent years, ERS has undertaken a number of initiatives to reach our customers better and to get their feedback. Among them are:

- **Improved subscription services.** In response to continued complaints from subscribers about poor service from GPO, we initiated an experiment last year with a private vendor. We began by offering some ERS periodicals through this commercial service. The vendor guarantees more responsiveness to customer complaints, offers multiple and multiyear subscriptions with one payment, provides faster delivery, permits purchase with credit cards via a toll free number, and offers marketing programs to increase awareness of our reports. Customer reaction has been positive, and periodical subscriptions have increased. Recently, ERS and NASS have joined forces to offer virtually all our reports, periodicals, and monographs via the private subscription service, which operates under our name.

- **Data product sales.** ERS regards its data resources as public goods, potentially useful to other analysts and to decisionmakers. In recent years, we have made progress in cataloging and computerizing our data bases and improving our data base management and management systems. Some 50 data products are now available on diskettes and tapes, and new products are being added monthly. Requests have grown steadily, and we are planning to offer these data products through the subscription service vendor.

- **Livestock and trade newsletters.** Ongoing situation reports provide analyses of market conditions and prospects. But their infrequency means that many of the important market data are out of date well before the next report is available to our clientele. Last year we began experimenting with short monthly newsletters, one for livestock and one for agricultural trade, to provide outlook customers timely updates of key market data. The strong favorable reaction means that we will be expanding this service to other commodities as resources permit.

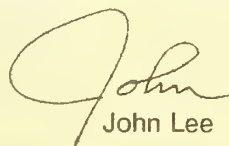
- **Regional industry outlook workshops.** Two years ago, we began a continuing series of outlook workshops primarily aimed at agribusiness decisionmakers and analysts but also including extension and other public-sector analysts. The objectives are to improve our usefulness to a key client group, broaden awareness of our products and expertise, enhance the credibility of ERS analysts with important market participants, and benefit from industry feedback on our products and programs. Successful workshops have been held in Minneapolis, Denver, Chicago, and St. Louis. The next outlook workshop will be in Memphis on April 12.

- **Audio and video products.** The results of ERS research and analysis are reported in dozens of radio reports and interviews each year. ERS staff also appear frequently on USDA and other farm and rural TV programs. ERS has an excellent radio/TV staff that regularly produces award-winning programs. In the coming year, we plan to experiment with new forms of video products that report the results of ERS work. Our goal is to reach millions of customers who would not otherwise have access to ERS information.

- **FINDERS ("Find-ERS").** A common complaint from the public is that finding out what information ERS has available, how it can be obtained, and what experts are available to answer questions is difficult. Late last summer, ERS produced a diskette that is easily usable in most personal computers. The diskette contains information about ERS products, personnel, and organization, and even a built-in order form. Demand for the diskette has been overwhelming. The diskette, named FINDERS, is now regularly updated, contains more information, and is available free of charge. Reproduction of this diskette by others is encouraged.

We have other initiatives on the drawing board. They include the possible use of CD-ROM disks to make the full texts of all our reports widely and inexpensively available and possibly including data diskettes inside publications where data are important components of the reports. Meanwhile, we continue to offer our quarterly catalog of new products, *Reports*, on a free subscription basis. We welcome other suggestions.

In return for taxpayer support, we have a responsibility to make the information we produce widely available. We take that responsibility seriously.

  
John Lee

## Does Advertising Boost the Demand for Cheese?

ERS economists James Blaylock (786-1862) and William Blisard report that during 1984-87 advertising increased sales of natural cheese for home consumption by 16 million pounds and processed cheese sales by 98 million pounds over what those sales would have been without advertising. Those findings, reported in *Effects of Advertising on the Demand for Cheese* (TB-1752, Dec. 1988), are among ERS's ongoing contributions to an annual report to Congress mandated by the Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983. The Act levies 15 cents per hundredweight of milk sold commercially for dairy product promotion and research.

Blaylock and Blisard's research also shows that, aside from the advertising effect, declining real cheese prices boosted natural cheese sales by 189 million pounds during 1984-87. Increased real personal income raised natural cheese sales by 123 million pounds, while decreasing processed cheese sales by only 5 million pounds.

## Effects of Honey Imports Examined

Domestic honey production, honeybee colony numbers, and the availability of pollination services have not declined during the 1980's despite a significant increase in honey imports. Those are the findings of an analysis requested in the Agricultural Competitiveness and Trade Act of 1988 and conducted by ERS economist Frederic Hoff (786-1883) and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service economist Jane Phillips.

The study results, recently reported to House and Senate Committees on Agriculture, also note that the honey price support

program has continued to help maintain production and income for U.S. beekeepers, though involving increasingly large program expenditures. The Food Security Act of 1985 has had the effect of dampening honey imports.

## Cotton Bugs Are Costly to Growers and Consumers

Despite widespread use of an array of pest-control technologies, cotton insects and mites remain costly, unwanted guests in cotton fields. ERS economist Craig Osteen (786-1462) reports that these pests cost cotton producers around \$645 million a year during 1981-84. These direct damage estimates consist of cotton yield losses and expenditures for pest control measures.

But that's not the entire picture. Beyond the direct damages, broader economic costs not considered in most studies of pest damages in agriculture include crop price changes, movement of production away from pest-infested regions, damage to other crops in infested areas, and consumer price impacts. These bring the total economic costs of cotton pests to \$1.5 billion annually.



Cotton pests and mites add up to \$1.5 billion annually to the cost of this popular fiber.

## Government Support to Agriculture Studied

Drawing on a broad program of work involving nearly 30 ERS researchers, a new report compiles detailed information on government support to agriculture around the world. *Agriculture in the Uruguay Round: Analyses of Government Support* (AGES-880802) covers most major countries, agricultural commodities, and policies and their effects on trade.

The report reveals significant government intervention in the agricultural sectors of almost all countries, whether large or small, rich or poor, importer or exporter. A wide range of commodities receives government support. Moreover, a great variety of mechanisms are used to subsidize farmers and in some cases to tax them implicitly.

A comparison of policy instruments used shows heavy reliance on policies that support prices and income and that subsidize the use of farm inputs. If the current GATT negotiations focus on the reduction of distortions to world trade, these policies will have to receive considerable attention.

The report was prepared under the technical supervision of Gary Ender (786-1664) and John Wainio.

## Rural Growth and Stability Studied

ERS analysts Molly Killian, John Redman (786-1544), and David Sears are conducting a study of growth and stability in rural counties. The study will compare counties that have had rapid and steady earnings growth since the 1979 recession with other rural counties on several sociodemographic dimensions. It will also profile rural areas that have experienced significant changes in their economic bases since 1969.



## ERS Issues New Report on Aquaculture

ERS has published an *Aquaculture Situation and Outlook Report (AQUA-1)* for the first time in 6 years. Growing demand for the information is traced to the rise in U.S. consumption of fish products, to over 20 pounds per capita in 1987, and rapidly expanding domestic production of fishery products.

ERS economists Michael Dicks (786-1888) and David Harvey report that while domestic aquacultural production—the controlled cultivation of aquatic animals and plants—is still relatively small compared with domestic wild harvest, it should continue to grow because the United States has been forced to rely on imports to meet an increasing share of domestic demand. For example, between 1980 and 1987, the value of imported edible fish grew from \$2.7 billion to \$5.7 billion.

U.S. aquacultural production of food fish and shellfish grew rapidly from 203 to 700 million pounds, or 20 percent a year, between 1980 and 1987. Catfish farming accounts for over half of domestic output, followed by salmon, crawfish, and trout.

## Working in ERS

*Working in ERS* is a new publication for ERS employees, colleagues, and prospective employees. The report covers such topics as the ERS mission, organization, products, cooperative research with land-grant universities, and clientele.

Free copies of *Working in ERS* are available from the EMS Information Division, 1301 New York Ave. NW, Rm. 208, Washington, DC 20005-4788 (202-786-1515).

## Personnel Notes

### Shane Is Appointed ATAD Deputy Director

Mathew Shane has been appointed deputy director, Agricultural and Trade Analysis Division. He will have principal responsibility for staff



Carolyn Riley

analysis coordination.

Shane joined ERS in December 1983 as leader, Macro Policy Section, Agricultural Development Branch, International Economics Division, and continued in this role in the Developing Economies Branch of ATAD.

Prior to joining ERS, Shane was executive director, Decisions Consultants Associates, Malaysia, during 1979-83. He was a member of the faculty of the Dept. of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the U. of Minnesota during 1969-78.

Shane has a B.A. from Queens College of the City U. of New York and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in economics from Purdue U.

### Mazie Is New ARED Assistant Director

Sara Mazie is the new assistant director for rural development situation and outlook, Agriculture and Rural Economy Division. She will be



Carolyn Riley

responsible for developing and coordinating the publication of ARED situation and outlook reports on economic and social conditions in rural America.

Mazie joined ERS in 1985 as assistant to the director for research information and dissemination and has been the executive editor of *Rural*

### Development Perspectives.

Before joining ERS, Mazie was a policy analyst in USDA's Office of Rural Development Policy. Earlier she participated in a research project assessing the public's understanding of conditions in rural America and was coeditor of *Nonmetropolitan America in Transition*.

Mazie has a B.A. in mathematics from Cornell U. and an M.S. in urban planning from Columbia U.

### Gardiner Is New ATAD Section Leader

Walter Gardiner is the new leader, Western Europe Section, Developed



Carolyn Riley

Market Economies Branch, Agriculture and Trade Analysis Division.

Gardiner joined ERS in 1982 at Purdue U. and transferred to Washington, D.C., to work in the Commodity Policy Section, International Trade Policy Branch. In 1987, he transferred to the Western Europe Section of the Developed Market Economies Branch.

Prior to joining ERS, Gardiner worked as a commodity analyst in the Horticultural and Tropical Products Division of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

Gardiner has a B.S. in economics from Mount St. Mary's College, an M.S. in agricultural and resource economics from the U. of Maryland, and a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Purdue U. He has received an ERS Administrator's Special Merit Award for work on export demand elasticities, a USDA Certificate of Appreciation for work on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's trade mandate study, and a USDA Certificate of Merit for work in the Western Europe Section.

## Ginzel Is New CED Cross-Commodity Analyst

John Ginzel is the new cross-commodity analyst, Livestock,



Carolyn Riley

Dairy, and Poultry Branch, Commodity Economics Division. Since joining ERS in 1986,

he has been involved in numerous policy and staff analyses, briefings of industry and USDA officials, and the

preparation of articles and reports on livestock production, marketing, and policy issues.

Prior to joining ERS, Ginzel spent 13 years as an applied commodity analyst, consultant, and executive with leading firms in the grain, livestock, and meat packing industries. His analytical interests and responsibilities have focused on risk management, uses of futures, forecasting methods, and international trade.

Ginzel has a B.S. in biochemistry and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in agricultural economics from Purdue U.

Affecting the South," at a Southern Legislative Conference meeting in Atlanta, Ga. • **Ross** also discussed poverty and policy issues in rural areas at a Bureau of Labor Statistics international labor statistics program • and **Clifford Rossi** was interviewed by an Iowa radio station concerning the consequences for farmers of the Technical Corrections Act of 1988.

## Agriculture and Trade Analysis Division

### Nancy Cochrane

participated in a U.S.-Polish Agricultural Working Group meeting • **William Coyle** and **Lois Caplan** participated in U.S.-Japan agricultural consultations • **Coyle** also briefed the U.S. Feed Grains Council on Japanese feed grain policies • **Larry Deaton**, **Walter Gardiner**, and **Michael Lopez** discussed the price effects of agricultural policies with International Trade Commission staff • **Arthur Dommen** briefed Office of International Cooperation and Development staff on his research on informal financial markets in Kenya • **Michael Herlihy** and **John Sullivan** briefed Cornell U. staff on ERS's SWOPSIM and U.S.-EC policy models • **David Kelch** participated in an International Monetary Fund seminar on the consequences of the EC's common agricultural policy • **Robert Koopman** presented a paper (coauthored with **Edward Cook** and **William Liefert**), "Soviet Support to Agriculture: Measurement and Impact on World Markets," at the National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, in Honolulu, Hawaii • **Koopman** and **Barry Krissoff** presented a seminar on ERS's SWOPSIM model and producer subsidy equivalents to a team of Soviet economists visiting the United States under the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Joint Agricultural Cooperation Agreement • **Ricardo Krajewski**, **Myles Mielke**, and **Paul Trapido** discussed producer subsidy equivalents for Argentina with

## Highlights of Staff Activities

### Agriculture and Rural Economy Division

At a Professional Agricultural Workers Conference at Tuskegee U., **Kenneth Deavers** presented a paper, "Scope and Dimensions of Problems Facing Rural America," **Leslie Whitener** presented a paper, "Labor Market Disadvantages Facing Farmers: A Regional Focus," **Donald Bellamy** presented a paper "Southern Persistently Low-Income Counties: Social and Economic Characteristics," and **Peggy Ross** chaired a session on human capital formation for rural development • **Calvin Beale** spoke on geographic and demographic aspects of nonmetro poverty at a rural poverty conference sponsored by the Aspen Institute • **Douglas Bowers** was interviewed on the events leading to the 1980 embargo against the U.S.S.R. by the London-based Twenty-First Century Trust • **Lowell Dyson** was interviewed by USDA's "A Better Way" television program on the history of drought relief programs, comparing current legislation with that of the 1930's • **Martha Frederick** presented a paper, "Improving the Base of Business and Industry Information to Monitor the Nonfarm Rural Economy," at a

National Governors' Association Conference on Integrating Data for Decisionmaking • **Gregory Gajewski**, **Merritt Hughes**, **Stephen Koenig**, and **Jerry Stam** participated in an NC-161 regional research committee meeting on "Financing Agriculture in a Changing Environment: Macro, Market Policy, and Management Issues," in McLean, Va. • **Hughes** also presented a paper, "Credit Rationing in a Regional Economic Model," at a Regional Science Association meeting in Toronto, Ont. • **John Kitchen** was a discussant at a meeting of the International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium in San Antonio, Tex. • **Sara Mazie** served on a U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services panel that evaluated proposals for establishing three to five rural health panel research centers • **Sherman Robinson** (visiting scholar from the U. of California, Berkeley) presented a paper coauthored with **Irma Adelman** (U. of California, Berkeley), "U.S. Competitiveness and the Exchange Rate: General Equilibrium Analysis of the U.S. Economy, 1982-86," at a Stanford U. conference on international productivity and competitiveness • **Robinson** also presented a seminar, "Modeling U.S. Agricultural Programs in a CGE Model," at the U. of California (Berkeley) and at the U. of Minnesota • **Peggy Ross** gave a presentation, "Economic and Sociodemographic Trends



staff of the International Trade Commission • **Michael Kurtzig** and **John Link** participated in a Social Science Agricultural Agenda Project conference on the social scientist's role in the development process • **Miles Lambert** was interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* for an article on the Bulgarian wine industry • **Nancy Schwartz** and **Barry Krissoff** presented a paper, "Sectoral Effects of Targeted Trade Policies," at an Allied Social Sciences Associations meeting in New York, N.Y. • **David Stallings** briefed Federal Reserve System economists on ERS's research on the effects of exchange rate changes on U.S. agricultural exports • **Francis Tuan** chaired a seminar on China's price reform attended by analysts from the World Bank and U.S. Dept. of State • **Francis Urban** discussed ways in which the coordination of statistics between Federal agencies can be improved at a meeting of the Federal Committee on International Statistics • and **Thomas Vollrath** participated in an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development meeting on "International Comparisons of Agricultural Production Costs: Competitiveness of Developing Country Producers," in Paris, France.

### *Commodity Economics Division*

**Karen Ackerman, Nicole Ballenger, and Mark Smith** discussed U.S. and Canadian export enhancement programs with representatives of the Canadian Wheat Board • **Ballenger and Smith** also participated in a meeting of the International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium in San Antonio, Tex. • **Robert Bohall** and **Howard McDowell** reviewed the dairy outlook and ERS's study of Federal milk marketing orders at a meeting of the National Milk Producers Federation in Anaheim, Calif. • **Boyd Buxton, Shannon Hamm, and Amy Sparks** participated in

a southern regional research committee meeting on fruit and vegetable marketing, in St. Petersburg, Fla. • **Buxton** also discussed Florida citrus costs of production with members of a citrus research center and the State statistician's office, in Orlando, Fla. • **Lee Christensen** and **Robert Bishop** attended a Mid-Atlantic extension meeting on poultry health and the problem of "salmonella enteritidis" in eggs, in Newark, Del. • **Terry Crawford** participated in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development meetings on trade, agricultural policy, and livestock issues, in Paris, France • **Crawford** also discussed grazing fees and **Samuel Evans** reviewed the outlook for crops at an Arizona Agribusiness Forum in Tucson, Ariz. • **Denis Dunham, Richard Haidacher, Charles Handy, William Lin, Lester Myers, Kenneth Nelson, and Bruce Wright** briefed a delegation of Chinese researchers on the U.S. food and fiber system and marketing research • **Ronald Gustafson, Richard Stillman, and Alden Manchester** discussed the lamb industry with representatives of the Australian Embassy and an Australian meat and livestock organization • **Harry Harp, Masao Matsumoto, Lester Myers, Ralph Parlett, and David Smallwood** discussed the effects of the 1988 drought on food assistance programs with staff of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service • **David Harvey** participated in an aquaculture conference in North Carolina • **T.Q. Hutchinson** participated in a southern regional research project meeting on U.S. grain marketing, in Atlanta, Ga. • **Doyle Johnson** participated in a national symposium on commercial field production of cut and dried flowers, in Minneapolis, Minn. • **Kenneth Nelson** was elected vice chairman of a southern technical research committee on livestock marketing • **Neill Schaller** discussed low-input sustainable agriculture with DuPont Corporation officials • **Sara Short** reviewed the dairy outlook at a

Northeast milk marketing order conference in New York, N.Y. • **Thomas Warden** explored ways to resolve differences in data on U.S. pineapple imports with representatives of the U.S. Customs Service and the Census Bureau • and **Paul Westcott** examined effects of commodity programs on soybeans with Argentine and Brazilian attendees at USDA's Outlook Conference.

### *Resources and Technology Division*

**Stephen Crutchfield** spoke on the agricultural impacts of environmental issues at a Terra International meeting in Kansas City, Mo. • **Beverly Fleisher** presented a paper on characterizing the economic risks of release of genetically engineered microorganisms at an Allied Social Sciences Associations meeting in New York, N.Y. • **Ralph Heimlich** presented a paper on changes in wetlands due to urbanization in the southeast at a Southern Natural Resource Economics Committee meeting in Baton Rouge, La. • at a National Governors' Association conference on integrating data for decisionmaking, **Robert Reining** and **Marlow Vesterby** presented data from ERS's recent study of land-use change in fast-growth areas and discussed prospects for a U.S. land use information system • and **Gene Wunderlich** was interviewed by "Voice of America" on U.S. agricultural land ownership and land reform.

### *Office of the Administrator*

**James Horsfield** and **Edward Reinsel** participated in a National Governors' Association conference on integrating data for decisionmaking • **John Lee** gave a keynote speech on "GATT, Decoupling, and the New Farm Bill," at an Arizona Agribusiness Forum in Tucson, Ariz. • **Lee** also participated in a Winrock Foundation symposium on the importance of Third-World growth to future U.S. trade prospects.

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